

The Royal British
Legion
Harwell Branch
BR1805

Monthly Branch Meeting
Held on 31st May 2016
In the Branch Headquarters at Westfield
At 20.00 Hours.

ATTENDANCE:

R.C. East	- President
R.J. White	- Chairman
P. Davies	- Vice Chairman, Ceremonial Officer and Deputy Standard Bearer*
P. A. Cox	- Secretary and Welfare Representative
Mrs S. E. Pateman	- Membership Secretary
S. T. Haycox	- Treasurer
C. S. East	- Standard Bearer and Assistant Poppy Appeal Organiser

* Present from the end of item 8

COMMITTEE: G Street, J Belton

MEMBERS: None

VISITOR: Mr. D. Milam, County Committee.

1. EXHORTATION AND KOHIMA EPITAPH

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present. This was followed by the exhortation and silent tribute; he ended with the Kohima Epitaph.

2. APOLOGIES: B. Mulford, I. Clarke, J Fleming

3. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2016 MEETING: (held May 3rd)

All present apart from Mr. Milam had seen the Minutes before the meeting. There were no corrections. They were accepted as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman

4. MATTERS ARISING:

The Chairman said that all Matters Arising would come up under the following reports.

5. D DAY SERVICE 2016

The meeting agreed that this item would be left in abeyance until the Ceremonial Officer arrived. It was considered after item 8.

6. ENROLLMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

There were no new members on the on line Membership Administration Portal since the last meeting and no paper applications.

7. SECRETARY'S REPORT:

The Secretary apologised that due to high volume of work and keeping track of tasks for the D Day ceremony he has only worked on a few other items.

7.1 Archive Boxes in club

In hand.

7.2 Lending Minutes to Harwell History Group and Moving to Oxfordshire History Centre

In hand.

7.3 Awards

The County MSO published the Harwell News article in the June County Circular. The wording for the Branch Awards was changed to "in recent years" to avoid confusion that the Branch awards had all just happened – some were a few years ago but included for completeness.

The Gold Badge Award application is in hand.

7.4 Branch Web Page

See PAO report and D Day report.

7.5 Distribution of Branch Minutes and County Circular.

The Secretary thanked those who checked sections of the minutes prior to distribution. He has distributed the April 2016 Minutes and May 2016 County Circular to Committee Members and put copies in the Club folder. David Marsh has put the minutes on the web site.

Approximate Cost £ 4.00 for approx. 80 sheets (same as last month)

Other printing approximate cost: £ 1.77 for approx 36 sheets.

The spare cartridge is now in use, the Secretary still intends to pay for the next refill in lieu of printing for another organisation.

7.6 2015 AGM Follow Up

AGM minutes in hand.

7.7 Welfare

No enquires this month.

7.8 Thanks for Stone Improvements

The thank you letter has been sent to Duncan Rogers, he and Angus Horner will put a plaque on the bench but will leave out their names.

7.9 Funeral Donation from Late Ms. Pam Grace

No further communication received.

7.10 Beret for President.

The Secretary made enquiries: the Standard Bearer obtained his from a former Standard

Bearer and Ian Clarke had one that the Branch already had. The Ceremonial Officer suggested a number of possible suppliers. Prices are about £12. The Secretary will investigate further.

8. MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

CURRENT PAID UP MEMBERSHIP: stands at 196

8.1 Renewals

There has been one more renewal through the MAP system.

8.2 Membership Trends

There was discussion of the decline in Harwell Branch membership including:

- The Chairman said that membership was 289 last year; we are losing members.
- The Membership Secretary said that members are not renewing due to the situation with the Club. They are waiting to see what happens.
- The Standard Bearer said that we are losing a lot of members.
- Mr. Milam said that there was a similar problem nationally. John Belton said that this was because the Second World War generation is now in their 90s
- The Membership Secretary and Chairman said that with Harwell Branch it was due to the Club's disaffiliation from the Legion and transition to a Village Club.
- The Standard Bearer said that in fairness a lot of members joined in the last 10-15 years to use the Club's facilities and are not that interested in the Legion. Also they are mostly not ex Service and cannot receive help from the Legion. Many of these members will join the Village Club instead though they respect all that the Legion does. Therefore we will lose a lot more members and may drop to only 100 members. There are not many ex Service people left locally.

Item 5 was taken at this point.

5 D DAY SERVICE 2016

The Ceremonial Officer apologised for his delayed arrival and reminded all present that the Service is this Saturday 4th June. He reported on progress since the last meeting:

5.1 Meeting with Rector

The Ceremonial Officer met with the Rector Rev. Dr. Jonathan Mobey, along with the President and Secretary. They went through the Service and surrounding arrangements. Rev Mobey was happy with all details. There were two actions arising which the Ceremonial Officer has completed.

5.2 Flypast

Further to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF) being unable to do a flypast, the Ceremonial Officer has also enquired with the Army Air Corps Historic Flight (AACHF). Unfortunately they too are unable to attend as the AACHF is now a stand-alone charity with limited funds and they do not have another event on the day to spread the costs. Therefore there will be no flypast this year.

5.3 Service Sheets

In addition to the approx. 50 service sheets left from previous years, Duncan Rogers of Harwell Campus Management has offered to print 100 more.

5.4 Bag Piper and Bugler

The Ceremonial Officer has talked to John McFarlane Horgan regarding what tunes to be

played and when in the Service he will play. Dr. Tony Hughes will play the bugle at the usual points in the Service.

5.5 First Aider

Following a request by the Ceremonial Officer, the Wantage ATC Squadron will provide the named first aiders.

5.6 Invitations to Participating Groups

Invitations have been agreed and sent to the following local organisations by the Ceremonial Officer and Secretary and reminders were sent as required. (W) Indicates wreath ordered:

Air Officer Commanding 38 Group RAF	Newbury Veterans Associations
RBL County Branches	Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light
Harwell RBL Club	Infantry Regimental Association
Air Training Corps Didcot & Wantage (W)	
Chilton Scouts and Cubs	Didcot Town Mayor (W)
Chilton School	Chilton Parish Council (W)
Glider Pilots Regiment Association	Harwell Parish Council (W)
Royal Air Force Association (RAFA)	Didcot Town Twinning Association (W)
Parachute Regiment Association	Vale of White Horse Council Chair (W)

Diamond Light Source (W)
Harwell Campus Management (W)
Medical Research Council (MRC) Mary Lyon Centre (W)
Magnox
Public Health England (W)
Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) Rutherford (W)

All have replied and confirmed they will attend apart from:

- Chilton Scouts - unable to attend
- RAFA and Magnox – yet to confirm.
- AOC of 38 Group – the AOC is not available but they may send a representative.
- The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Regiment – the invitation was sent to an ex serviceman who runs a website on the regiment, he is forwarding it to suitable contacts.

The Ceremonial Officer said that a member of the public whose father took off from RAF Harwell has been in touch and will also attend.

5.7 Wreaths

The Ceremonial Officer has spoken to Hanney Poppy Appeal Organiser Bridie Spinks and she has agreed to be PAO and provide wreaths for the event. She set a deadline of 19th May for orders. The majority of attendees requested a wreath to be supplied by the Branch. The Ceremonial Officer and Secretary have coordinated to compose a list of wreaths required and totals of each type for Ms Spinks. She has ordered and received them from Poppy HQ.

The Secretary listed the wreaths orders (as in item 5.5 and Harwell Branch). He has agreed to deliver some before the day. Payment has already been received from Diamond and STFC Rutherford. The remaining payments should be passed to Ms Spinks on the day.

5.8 Public Address System

In order to augment the Harwell Church Coomber system which is insufficient to overcome the traffic noise, the Ceremonial Officer has talked to the Chilton Village Hall management team and they have agreed to again provide and set up their PA system.

5.9 Publicity

The Secretary has put up posters in the Club, Headfirst, Harwell News and Chilton Garden Centre.

5.10 Refreshments

The Ceremonial Officer said that following discussions with Anne Fisher and Yvonne Hinchliffe catering for 20 at a cost of £70 has been agreed.

No Objections.

5.11 Evening Entertainment at Harwell Club 4th June

Yvonne Hinchliffe requested that the Branch publicise the Queen's 90th Birthday show by the "Silouettes" vocal group. Tickets are £7.50 or £5 for ex service personnel in uniform who attended the service. This has been advertised in the County Circular and Branch D Day web page and the Ceremonial Officer has emailed details to all groups due to attend.

5.12 Glider Pilots Regiment Association (GPRA) Tribute

Steve Wright, the contact for the GPRA, has informed the Ceremonial Officer that this will be the last D Day service that they attend as the GPRA will disband on the 31st December. Mr Wright gave a talk at the Harwell Campus cricket pavilion on D Day on the evening of the 70th Anniversary two years ago. The Ceremonial Officer will invite him in a personal capacity in future years.

To recognise this, the Ceremonial Officer has put some words together about the history of the Regiment and Association. The Rector and Steve Wright of the GPRA have edited and agreed the words. The Rector will read this at the end of the Service.

The President said that the Guinea Pigs Club is also on the verge of disbanding as there are only 8 members left.

John Belton said that we should make it clear that all veterans are welcome to attend as individuals. Veterans of several regiments have attended individually in the past.

The Chairman said that it is a public event, individual veterans are always welcome.

5.13 Bucket Collection

The Secretary has contacted Hazel King who helped with this last year and she will help again this year.

5.14 Timetable

The Secretary will complete and distribute the second version of the timetable shortly.

The Chairman said that it is an excellent job.

9 TREASURER'S REPORT:

The Treasurer reported that accounts stood as follows as of 18th April 2016:

HARWELL BRANCH

Current Account:	£ 521.84
B.F.I. Account	<u>£ 1193.52</u>
Total:	<u>£ 1715.36</u>

9.1 Totals

The accounts stand the same as at the last meeting. Statements have been received for May but contain no entries. The latest receipts are two bank giro credits which the Treasurer is assuming are for membership fees but he still has not received anything to confirm this.

10 CORRESPONDENCE:

10.1 May County Circular (distributed).

Including: Harwell D Day Service, HM Queen's 90th Birthday show at Harwell Club on 4th June and Harwell Branch Awards. Attached documents are:

- Cumnor Road Race poster (not printed)
- Standard Bearer form for Cenotaph Parade and Royal Albert Hall – Sent to Standard Bearers.

10.2 Annual Conference 21st and 22nd May Final Agenda

By post from Legion HQ.

The following items were not printed but can be on request:

10.3 Laying up of the Vale of the White Horse Group Standard 26th June

See also Standard Bearer's report. At Wantage Parish Church, on Armed forces day. Assemble at "the Beacon" – i.e. the Wantage Civic Hall at 12:00 march to Church, Ceremony at 14:00.

10.4 EU Referendum Guidelines and Extra Information

The Guidelines are as received previously - the Legion is politically neutral and campaign meetings cannot be held in Branches or Clubs. The Legion's name cannot be used to convey political views and Legion trustees and representatives cannot comment in their official capacity. There has been one incident on Legion premises already. The Charity Commission can take action against the Legion and has already has against another charity.

10.5 Legassee Interviews with Veterans.

The latest interview is with a WW2 SOE veteran.

10.6 In Kind Direct

This organisation supports charities by offering donated cleaning and other products for our beneficiaries or fundraising event "goody bags" etc. in exchange for a handling charge of 20% of the retail cost. The Secretary suggested that this is referred to County Welfare.

Agreed by the Committee.

10.7 Harwell News New Editor Required

Contact the Parish Clerk.

10.8 Marketing Emails

Usual special events and business courses - 115 items since the April meeting.

11 POPPY APPEAL ORGANISER REPORT:

The Secretary reported:

11.1 Poppy Appeal Organiser and Collectors Vacancy

The Secretary has sent the advert again to the editors of the Harwell News, Church Broadsheet and Chilton Chronicle.

11.2 Remembrancetide Collection Merchandise

The Secretary believes that the previous Poppy Appeal Organiser submitted the order for this in July. We may wish to consider ordering the schools packs soon.

Hanney PAO Bridey Spinks has offered to supply wreaths for Remembrance Sunday if required.

12 STANDARD BEARER REPORT

12.1 Past Parades

The Standard has not been paraded since the last meeting.

12.2 D Day Memorial Service

The Standard Bearer will attend and carry the Standard.

12.3 Laying up of the Vale of the White Horse Group Standard 26th June

The Standard Bearer said the he and Deputy Standard Bearer Ian Clarke are both unavailable.

The Ceremonial Officer said that he has been requested to help generally at the parade by David Drew and is also unavailable to carry the Standard.

12.4 Shrivenham Memorial Service

The Standard Bearer said that local television news had covered this service which was attended by the Faringdon Branch Standard. It commemorated a young serviceman that had died at the Battle of Jutland.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

13.1 Address by County Committee Member Del Milam and Question and Answer Session.

Mr. Milam said that it was very important how Branches interact with the local community. Harwell Branch is better than some. He asked if we feel we have enough support from HQ. The Secretary replied that the County Membership Support Officer is always happy to speak to us and is extremely helpful.

Mr Milam said that Legion communications could be improved. The staff at Haig House could visit the Branches more often, which would help when voting for Legion National Committee members.

Mr Milam asked how the Branch was going. It was stated that there are 196 members, which is down substantially since last year. Mr. Milam said that it is the same everywhere, people are not interested. Club members join for the Club; it is something the Legion needs to look at. He regularly speaks to new recruits at local barracks about the Legion. It is difficult to get the point across that they may not need the Legion's help now but may do in a few years time.

The Chairman asked if Help for Heroes had taken any members away. Mr Milam said that the Legion has missed opportunities: there are local and national events with a Legion presence or contribution that does not get publicised enough for example the Legion presence at the Abingdon County Fair and the Legion support of the Invictus Games.

The President said that the Legion never mentions the numbers of people helped, as the RAC does. Until it does people won't know.

Mr. Milam said that it should be communicated that the Legion has a heart for welfare and looking after ex service people.

The Chairman said there privacy is required where welfare is concerned but the Legion could make a general statement including items not publicised elsewhere.

Mr. Milam said that the Legion does welfare well. The wives served as well and widows are forgotten. Other organisations have had successful initiatives such as accepting members from other organisations as affiliated members. The Chairman said that the Legion accepts service and non service as members.

Mr. Milam said that he was pleased to see 3 younger committee members.

John Beltion asked about the future of the Women's Section following the decisions at the Women's Section and National conferences. Discussion and speculation ensued.

Mr Milam concluded by saying that he was pleased to meet everyone. He gave some details of his long and varied service career. He concluded by saying that the grass roots of the Legion, Remembrance and Welfare are important. The Legion is a membership organisation, lots of members have not rejoined following the issues with renewal this year. But all ex service can come to the Legion for help. Even if they have only served for a day we will look after them.

14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 28th June 2016

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:49 hours.